GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:270
ANSWERED ON:19.02.2003
OVERLAND TRADE BETWEEN INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN
DADICHILUKA VEERA GOURI SANKARA RAO;KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a bilateral meeting was held during the first week of January 2003 which included India, Iran and Afghanistan;

(b) if so, whether a proposal for an alternative transit route to Afghanistan was mooted in the wake of Pakistan refusing overland trade between India and Afghanistan;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the stage at which the matter stands at present?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA)

(a)-(d) Yes, Sir. A trilateral meeting between India, Iran and Afghanistan was held on 4 and 5 January 2003 at Tehran to discuss the development of transit and transport between the three countries, elimination of barriers and constraints and providing safe, smooth, rapid and low-cost transportation. At the end of the meeting, a Memorandum of Understanding on the Development and Construction of Transit and Transport Infrastructures in Chabahar-Milak-Zaranj-Delaram route was signed between the three countries aimed at improving access to Afghanistan, and upgrading the infrastructure at Chabahar port and relevant road segments.